

3  
341.2005  
P115  
V41  
no.1  
c.2



Newsletter of the Montana  
Office of Public Instruction  
Nancy Keenan, Superintendent  
Vol. 41, No. 1

<b>Certification</b>	<b>2</b>
New rule changes could affect teachers' future renewal plans.	
<b>Bridges</b>	<b>3</b>
Providing opportunities for students to learn through community service promotes academic achievement and improves community relations.	
<b>School Improvement</b>	<b>4-6</b>
Check out the framework of OPI's new school improvement initiative.	
<b>School Trust Lands</b>	<b>7</b>
Montana's state school trust lands are managed for the benefit of Montana's public schools.	
<b>Shaking things up</b>	<b>8</b>
The 1997 amendments to IDEA represent a sweeping reform. And, October is Earthquake Preparedness Month.	
<b>Dispatches</b>	<b>9</b>
Updates from OPI specialists.	
<b>And More . . .</b>	

## Making good schools better

### OPI enlists help with school improvement initiative

**T**his fall as students and teachers were returning to school, State Superintendent Nancy Keenan was talking to newspaper editorial boards and groups of educators about the School Improvement Initiative being launched by the Office of Public Instruction (OPI).

"These are exciting times for educators," said Keenan. "Many groups are doing work that can help to improve the education we offer our students. It is important that we coordinate our efforts and work together. The School Improvement Initiative will serve to do that in Montana."



**School improvement projects**

The Montana School Initiative can actually be separated into five distinct, but interlocking projects (see pages 4-6 for a more complete introduction ).

- The Standards Project
- The Assessment Project
- The Education Profile Project
- The Professional Development/Teacher Certification Project
- The Performance-Based Accreditation Project.

"These projects all build on the good work that has been done and rely on the willingness of everyone in Montana—educators, parents, students, and community members—to work together to improve Montana's schools," said Keenan.

She also emphasized two other elements that are fundamental to each of these OPI projects and to all facets of the process of school improvement. Those are the E<sup>3</sup> principle and the role of educational data.

**The E<sup>3</sup> Principle**

"Equity, effectiveness, and efficiency are the three principles upon which we must lay the foundation for all of our work on improving our schools," explained Keenan. "We need to make sure that all of Montana's students will reap the benefits." In addition, Keenan said we need



Photo: Marti Stone

Hard at work: as Montana's students start another year of school, the effort continues to make Montana's good schools better.

to make sure educational practices are working in the best and most efficient manner.

**The role of data**

The importance of collecting, reporting, and gleaning useful information from educational data is central to the cycle of school improvement.

(Continued on page 5)

## E-Rate Update

### Montana schools can apply for telecommunication discounts

**U**nder the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, most Montana K-12 schools and libraries can apply for substantial discounts on the costs of certain telecommunications services.

**What is the E-rate?**

The federal Act sets aside \$2.25 billion annually to provide federally funded discounts—or E-rates—to the nation's K-12 schools, libraries, and rural health care providers.

While E-rate discounts do not cover teacher and employee training, voice mail, fax machines, modems, or software and computer

purchases, they do apply to:

- ✓ local and long distance telecommunications services;
- ✓ the installation and maintenance of internal connections; and
- ✓ Internet access, including communications links to Internet service providers, email, routers, hubs, network file servers, and wireless local area networks.

E-rate discounts range from 20-90 percent, depending on a school's or library's location and level of economic disadvantage. The percentage of a school's students eligible for the national free and reduced-priced lunch program determines the school's level of economic disadvantage. And, as long as their level of disadvantage remains below 50

(Continued on page 3)

Second Class  
POSTAGE PAID  
Helena, MT 59620  
USPS 601690

Nancy Keenan, Superintendent  
Office of Public Instruction  
PO Box 202501  
Helena, MT 59620-2501

MONTANA SCHOOLS X001

CATHY SIEGNER  
MONTANA STATE LIBRARY  
DEADHEAD

Discount Rates						
Percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches	0-1%	1-19%	20-34%	35-49%	50-74%	75-100%
Discount rate for urban schools	20%	40%	50%	60%	80%	90%
Discount rate for rural schools	25%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%

A listing of discounts by school district is posted on the OPI Internet web site at [www.opi.mt.gov/opi/Erata.html](http://www.opi.mt.gov/opi/Erata.html).



## Message from Nancy Keenan

### Standards form foundation for better teaching and learning

**W**elcome back to school! I hope that the good energy and enthusiasm you felt at the beginning of September will stay with you throughout the 1997-98 school year.

In this issue of *Montana Schools*, I'd like to introduce you to the basic framework of OPI's School Improvement Initiative and our plans for the upcoming two years (see pages 4-6). Overall school improvement depends on high standards, assessing what kids know and are able to do, and reporting to the public on where we are and how we have improved. This is not new to many of you. You've been working over the past few years on standards, curriculum development and assessment. We plan to build on the work accomplished by Project Excellence. My office will facilitate the process of revising (and, in some areas, developing for the first time) content and performance standards for core academic areas.



The standards or expectations developed under Project Excellence in the late 1980s are, for the most part, input standards. These input standards focus on how many hours of study a student must complete in an academic subject area in order to move to the next level. For example, four units of English at the high school level are presumed to equate to proficiency for the purposes of graduation.

The obvious problem that arises when an educational system is built on input standards alone is that we have not specifically defined our expectations for academic performance. Without specifics in place, how can we measure our students' abilities? How will we know how good is good enough? By working together through the School Improvement Initiative, Montana's education community will set statewide expectations for academic performance at the 4th, 8th, and 12th-grade levels.

In the discussion of standards, there are those who argue that setting expectations is not important. They assert that if we just report test scores and other measures of student achievement, then schools will improve their educational services and students will learn more. The logic of this approach is flawed. If we don't set expectations for performance, we are likely to compare ourselves to the average performance and think that average is good enough, not only for our students, but for our schools as well.

No matter where we sit, in the State Capitol or in your classrooms, we need a collective understanding of our expectations for our students, and we need to know how our students measure up. It is no longer good enough to know if students are above or below average; we need to find out whether they are able to attain the standards to which the real world will hold them accountable. We owe it to our students to give our very best in this endeavor.

What does this drive for content and performance standards mean for Montana's classroom teachers? You are a critical partner in setting expectations for student performance at the various grade levels, designing curriculum to help all students reach proficiency or better in each of the core academic subject areas, and developing tools to assess whether students are achieving the academic knowledge and skills that are expected. I will be looking for your expertise, assistance, and guidance as we embark upon this important project.

Have a great fall season. Do keep in touch; I always enjoy hearing from you!

*Nancy Keenan*

**M**ontana Schools (USPS 601690) is published bimonthly except July/August by the Office of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 202501, Helena, Montana 59620-2501. It is distributed free to schools and members of boards and groups interested in education in Montana. Second Class postage is paid at Helena, Montana. Montana Schools is published each October, December, February, April, and June. Deadline for articles is the first of the month prior to each publishing month. They should be sent to Beth Satre, Editor, at the above address. If it is possible, submit your articles electronically to <bsatre@opi.mt.gov> POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Office of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620-2501

## Certification rules change

**S**everal certification changes that could influence teachers' future renewal plans take effect this fall. One change allows another option for earning renewal unit credit, the others modify Montana's basic skills testing requirement.

### Renewal credit

Now, when Montana certificate holders participate in another state's approved professional development programs, their work may be considered for use in Montana certificate renewal.

A word of caution, however—license holders *should not assume* that the credits they earn in an out-of-state program will apply toward their renewal requirements.

For its programs' credits to count, a state's renewal process must guarantee standards at least as rigorous as Montana's. At this time, Washington is the only state whose process has gained general approval for use in Montana certificate renewal. Those interested in using this option are urged to check with OPI Certification staff before enrolling in an out-of-state program.

### Testing changes

Educators previously certified in Montana, who currently hold Class 5 Provisional certificates, need no longer take the test for Montana certification to meet the

requirements to reinstate their certification. If they have not already completed the testing requirement, Class 5 Provisional certificate holders on a plan for "reinstatement" should contact OPI Certification.

Applicants for first-time certification in Montana who have completed state-mandated basic skills testing in another state may submit proof of that testing and, most likely, avoid retesting. In addition, applicants can receive a waiver of the basic skills testing requirement by submitting evidence that a regionally accredited university has accepted their Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores.

### Assistance available

OPI's Certification staff stand ready to help with any questions or concerns about these changes or any other certification issues. Certification specialists are available to take calls from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday (444-3150). The specialists reserve the time before 10 a.m. to attend to the paperwork necessary to process applications for certification.

If, however, it is necessary to speak with someone before 10 a.m., please call Don Freshour (444-2577). We appreciate your continued understanding and cooperation. ■

—Don Freshour, Director, OPI Certification

## Calling all University of Utah graduates

**T**he University of Utah is currently evaluating their teacher education program and would like to determine the "program satisfaction" of their graduates. They ask Montana teachers who were certified through their program between 1990-1997 to contact Mary D. Burbank, Evaluation Coordinator, University of Utah, Department of Educational Studies, 1705 East Campus Center Drive #307, Salt Lake City, UT 8112-9256 (email: burban\_m@gse.utah.edu). ■

## School Finance update

**T**he 1997 legislature enacted two bills that could affect school district's calendars and expenditures this school year.

### Changes to the school calendar

During the 1997 legislative session, lawmakers passed Senate Bill 71, which alters the requirements for pupil instruction days. Schools are now required to run 180 calendar days of pupil instruction (90 for Kindergarten), and at least 360 hours for Kindergarten, 720 hours for grades 1-4, and 1,080 hours for grades 5-12. The number of hours per day may vary, depending on the schedule set by a district's school board.

Districts which intend to hold more than 180 calendar days of

instruction, should be aware, however, that the law restricts state transportation payments to 180 days a year.

### "One-time-only" funds paid

Due to a one-time-funding program approved by the 1997 Legislature, Montana school districts received about \$76 per student this past September. Schools can use these funds for textbooks, technology acquisitions, library materials, or building maintenance at any time during the 1997-98 and 1998-99 school years. The same year districts use their one-time-only money, they must match that expenditure in one of the same four categories. ■

—Joan Anderson, Administrator, School Budget & Accounting Division





## E-rate update, continued...

percent, urban schools get slightly lower discounts than rural schools. If they do not participate in the school lunch program or have had problems with the undercounting of eligible students, schools can choose from other federally approved, alternative mechanisms to determine their economic disadvantage level. The library discounts are based on the level of economic disadvantage of the school district in which the library is located.

### Applying for the E-rate

Currently, E-rate applications are not being accepted; application forms will probably not be available until November 1997. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will issue a public notice when the application process is in place. It is expected that the first E-rate discounts will be available January 1, 1998, at the earliest.

The FCC has put the National Exchange Carriers Association (NECA) in charge of the E-rate program. Thus, Montana libraries and K-12 public and nonpublic schools apply for the discounts through the NECA. The flow chart below outlines the actual application process.

### Schools should be ready

Because of the annual cap of \$2.25 billion, many assume that the E-rate money will be disbursed on a first-come, first-served basis. For that reason, Montana schools should be ready to apply as soon as the FCC finalizes the application form and the NECA web sites are functional.

The task that will, perhaps, prove most time-consuming for schools and libraries is receiving the required state-level approval of the technology plan that must accompany their E-rate application. School districts need approval from the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), while libraries need approval from the Montana State Library.

### School technology plan approval

Since OPI's highest priority is making sure Montana schools can apply for the discounts this year, the

approval process for schools' technology plans is designed to be as expedient and fair as possible.

For that reason, approval will be based only on the FCC basic requirements, which are listed in the sidebar to the right. To prevent bottlenecks caused by too few readers, OPI has recruited school personnel to serve on review committees. These committees will be reading and evaluating schools' technology plans, and OPI will act on their recommendations. In order to allow for better coordination and faster evaluation, schools are asked to submit their plans electronically.

Although schools face no deadline, they should try to submit their plans to OPI by November 15, 1997, in order to have their E-rate application finalized by the time NECA starts to accept them. If they submit their technology plans in electronic format, schools can expect OPI approval within three weeks.

### No need to reinvent the plan

Only those schools who have *no* plan in place need to start from scratch on their technology plan. To make for easy E-rate approval, those schools should consider structuring their plan in two sections, using the FCC requirements as a template.

If a school or school district has recently received a federal or state grant that required an OPI-approved technology plan, they do not need to submit a new technology plan for the E-rate process. Instead, they must only

(Continued on page 7)

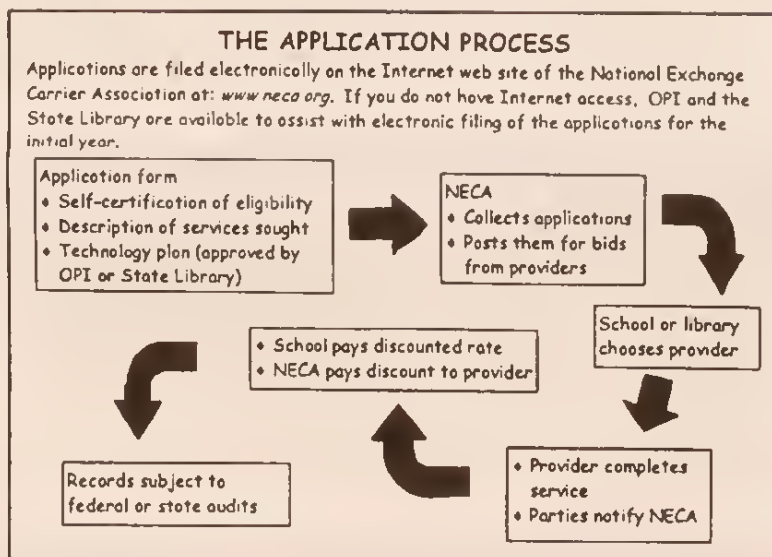
## FCC requirements for technology plans

According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) order, school district plans should include two major portions:

- A: A technology inventory and assessment; and
- B: Specific plans for using those technologies and integrating them into their curriculum. A district should address both their short-term and long-term plans.

The technology inventory and assessment must, at a minimum, address the following six categories. In these categories, schools are required to report, along with the technology they currently have, any purchases, installations, or training that they have budgeted or planned for this, the next or future academic years.

- A-1. A school's computer equipment, whether the computers have modems, and the speed of those modems.
- A-2. A school's internal connections. If a school has specific plans to organize volunteer labor to install internal connections, those plans should be included in the report.
- A-3. The computer software a school needs for its computers to communicate, both over the school's internal network and with any currently accessible, public telecommunications network.
- A-4. The experience and training a school's staff has in the use of the equipment that will be connected to the telecommunications network.
- A-5. Any contracts the school district holds for the maintenance of its computer equipment.
- A-6. The capacity of the school's electrical system to handle simultaneous users.



## Bridges

### Students learn by applying classroom knowledge to community projects

What is learning through service? It is giving students a chance to apply their academic skills and knowledge to address real needs in their communities—an opportunity which provides them with a concrete purpose for learning. In short, learning through service is smart teaching.

#### Not a curriculum "add-on"

Service-learning should be embedded in the curriculum. Identifying and teaching the skills and knowledge students need to complete service projects enhances the curriculum and provides students with meaningful, hands-on learning experiences. In

addition, projects can improve community relations, create skilled employees, and enable students to acquire civic skills and responsibilities.

#### K-12 Service-learning projects

In 1994, the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) launched 13 K-12 school-based, three-year projects, and awarded an additional six mini-grants this past spring. These projects involved 4,903 students and 615 adult volunteers in various forms of community service. They are designed to foster excellence in service-learning among the state's young people and to support coordinated training and resource development at the local, state, and regional levels.

Learn and Serve Montana projects are located at Arlee High School, Canyon Creek School—Billings, Chief Joseph Middle School—Bozeman, Hardin and Helena School Districts, Missoula County Public Schools, and Powder River County High School—Broadus.

The Belgrade Public School District, Dixon and Hardin Public Schools, Lincoln County High School—Eureka, Missoula County Schools, and Malta Elementary School conducted mini-grant projects. District administrators and county superintendents should have received a pamphlet which contains more information. The pamphlet was mailed in May 1997.

#### A few projects

**Powder River County High:** After studying the Great Depression and reading "The Grapes of Wrath" by John Steinbeck, 42 sophomores interviewed Broadus-area residents about their experiences in the "dirty thirties." They then wrote biographies for English class, which were presented to the Powder River Historical Society. The students also developed a Depression Trivia Quiz, which museum visitors can take.

The project helped preserve an important piece of local history, and gave students a chance to learn about the

(Continued on page 8)

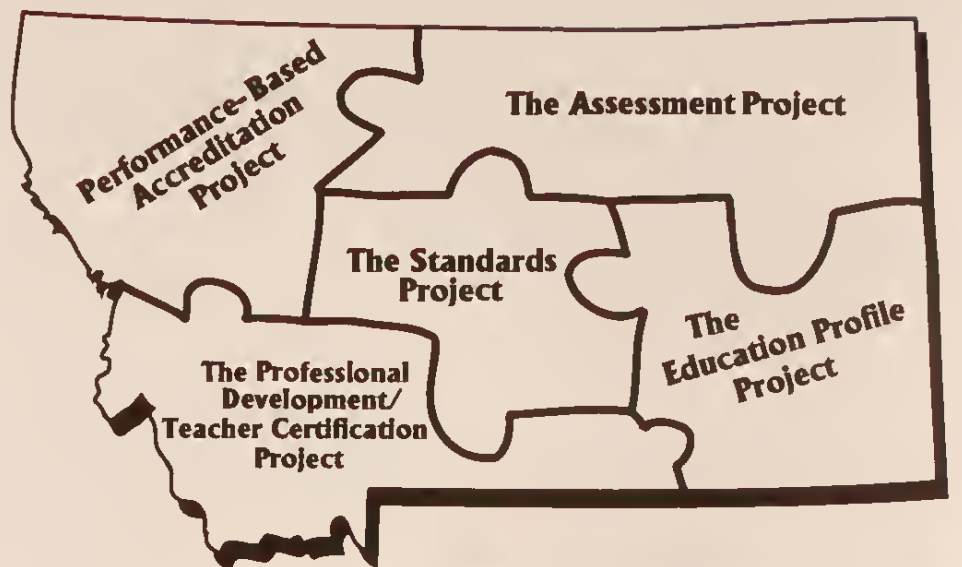


# The school improvement puzzle

## Fitting together the pieces of the Montana School Improvement Initiative

**E**ducation is a complex and complicated process, and so is improving our schools. As the graphic to the right represents, the Office of Public Instruction's (OPI) school improvement process has five distinct, but interlocking projects. Each addresses a key area or player in Montana's educational system, and each is integral to the entire process of school improvement.

When the results of these five projects are put together, we all — students, educators, parents, and community members alike — will have a clearer picture of how to continue the process of improving Montana's schools and giving all Montana children the best education possible.



## The Standards Project: Building on Project Excellence

**A**mericans expect strict standards to govern construction of buildings, bridges, highways, and tunnels; shoddy work puts lives at risk. They expect stringent standards to protect drinking water, food they eat, air they breathe—standards are created because they improve the activity of life.

—Diane Ravitch, Assistant Secretary of Education under President Bush

**P**roject Excellence represents Montana's last, comprehensive standards review that covered all academic areas. Since then, however, there have been substantial developments in many fields, especially technology, that profoundly affect education and the knowledge and skills students need to succeed.

### Building on a firm foundation

Over the next two years, OPI will facilitate an effort to review, update (and, in some areas, develop for the first time) content and performance standards for core academic areas, building on the good work that Project Excellence accomplished in the Model Learner Goals.

### Working together

As educators know, this is not

work that can be done well in isolation. So, this current process will continue the partnerships that proved so successful in Project Excellence.

### Content and performance standards review: 1997-98

OPI and the Montana Board of Public Education, working with Montana's professional teaching associations, community organizations, parents, and the state's higher education community, are building on Montana's current standards in four subject areas:

- ✓ Reading,
- ✓ Mathematics,
- ✓ Science, and
- ✓ Health Enhancement.

They will be reviewing the current content standards and developing performance standards, finishing in 1998. ■

### Standards, Benchmarks, Performance: Basic Definitions

**C**ontent Standards indicate what students should know, understand, and be able to do in a specific content area, such as reading, mathematics, or social studies.

**B**enchmarks define our expectations for students' knowledge, skills, and abilities along a developmental continuum in each content area. That continuum is focused at three points—the end of the primary grades (grade 4), the end of the intermediate grades (grade 8), and upon graduation (grade 12).

**P**erformance Levels define the levels of achievement in broad, general terms.

✓ **Novice** — This level denotes that the student is beginning to attain the prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for work at each benchmark.

✓ **Nearing Proficiency** — This level denotes that the student has partial mastery of the prerequisite knowledge and skills fundamental for proficient work at each benchmark.

✓ **Proficient** — This level denotes solid academic performance for each benchmark. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter.

✓ **Advanced** — This level denotes superior performance.

**P**erformance Standards are the specific expectations for performance in each content area at each of the three benchmarks. Performance standards explicitly define the quality of performance, describe the performance to be demonstrated, and answer the question: "How good is good enough?"

**S**tandards can improve achievement by clearly defining what is to be taught and what kind of performance is expected.

—Diane Ravitch, Assistant Secretary of Education under President Bush

## The Assessment Project: Aligning the test to the task

**A**s all teachers know, a good test must be reflective of what they have taught and what they expect their students to know. Otherwise, they would have no

way of correctly gauging how well their students are doing or how effective their teaching methods are. The same concept applies at all levels of education. If an assessment method is to be

effective and provide information that is useful for school improvement, it must be aligned both to content and performance standards and to the purpose of the assessment. ■

### Effective Use of Assessment Strategies at Different Education Levels

Education Level	Selected Response	Short Answer	Extended Response	Performance Events	Performance Tasks	Portfolio
National	XXX	XX	X			
State	XXX	XX	XX	X		X
District	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	X	XX
School	XX	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	XXX
Classroom	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX

Each X indicates the degree to which each type of assessment might be used most efficiently at each level. The more "X"s, the more efficient the use of assessment.

**W**ithout .... authentic and accurate systems to tell us how well schools and students are doing, efforts to improve our schools will lack direction.

— Statement issued at the end of Education Summit II, March 1996



More on assessment ...

Why Test?

Because people involved in the educational system have different tasks, they need different kinds of information. Classroom teachers need to determine which of their students needs what help. A school board member, on the other hand, needs to know whether all the students in a district are learning and how best to allocate the district's resources.

Tests can do a variety of things. They can:

- ✓ improve teaching and learning;
- ✓ make sure our students get the services appropriate to their knowledge and ability;
- ✓ evaluate a program's effectiveness;
- ✓ allow for accreditation of our schools; and
- ✓ allow schools and educators to be accountable to students, parents, and taxpayers. ■

Assessment Purposes at Different Levels of Education<sup>1</sup>

Education Level	Monitor Results	Accountability	Improve Student Performance	Allocate Resources	Selection/Placement	Accreditation	Program Evaluation
National	XXX	X		X		X	
State	XXX	XXX	X	XX		XXX	X
District	XX	XXX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX
School	X	XX	XXX	X	XXX	X	XX
Classroom		X	XXX		XX	X	X
Student		X	XXX		X	X	X

Each X indicates the degree to which each type of assessment might be used most efficiently at each level. The more "X"s, the more efficient the use of assessment.

<sup>1</sup>Both this figure and the figure "Effective Use of Assessment Strategies" found on the previous page are from: *Designing Coordinated Assessment Systems*, published by the Council of Chief State School Officers, Edward D. Roeber, Director of Student Assessment Programs, November 1996.

The Educational Profile Project: Measuring the effectiveness of schools

Parents, communities, policymakers, and educators want useful information that will help them evaluate and improve their schools. Various methods of assessment can be used to collect various sorts of information. Pieces of raw, isolated data, however, mean little until they are placed into an understandable context. The Educational Profile Project will help provide that context.

Method of communication

Over the next two years, OPI will develop a state profile that communities can use to better understand how local students and schools are doing. The profile will allow communities to evaluate their local schools and make informed decisions about where to focus local school improvement efforts.

Possible indicators

Providing meaningful information to the public requires care in choosing the measures used. A large group of parents and policymakers were presented with information in the "major categories" listed in the table on the right and asked to identify the information they found most valuable in evaluating a school's effectiveness. The categories at right are in the order they suggested, with the most useful measure at the top. The group also noted that accurate evaluation required a variety of measures. ■

Possible Indicators of Effective Schools		
Major Categories	Possible Measures	
SCHOOL PROGRAM AND COURSE OFFERINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• basic and advanced courses</li><li>• inclusion of technology</li><li>• structure of school day</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• additional federal or state programs</li><li>• access to vocational programs</li></ul>
STUDENT ENVIRONMENT INFORMATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• safety factors</li><li>• school time for learning</li><li>• support for high-needs students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• parent involvement and satisfaction</li><li>• community and business volunteers</li></ul>
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• norm-referenced test scores</li><li>• performance levels reports (eg., novice, nearing proficiency, proficient, and advanced) for several different measures of achievement</li><li>• clear standards and expectations</li></ul>	
SCHOOL SUCCESS INFORMATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• school and student honors</li><li>• accomplishments in music, speech, drama, and athletics</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• post-graduation plans of seniors</li><li>• school accreditation status</li><li>• rates at which students graduate</li></ul>
STUDENT SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• counseling and career guidance</li><li>• extracurricular activities</li><li>• clubs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• intramurals</li><li>• referral system</li></ul>
SCHOOL FINANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• per student expenditures</li><li>• portion spent on instruction</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• teacher/administrator salaries</li></ul>
SCHOOL STAFFING AND TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• student/teacher ratios</li><li>• administrator/teacher ratios</li><li>• teacher experience</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• staff involvement in decision making</li><li>• teacher degrees, ethnicity</li></ul>
STUDENT ATTENDANCE INFORMATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• attendance and absences</li><li>• expulsions, suspensions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• dropout ratio</li><li>• truancy</li></ul>
SCHOOL FACILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• construction history</li><li>• technology available</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• books in library</li></ul>
BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• student mobility</li><li>• gender counts</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• race/ethnicity</li></ul>

What gets measured, gets done.

If you don't measure results, you can't tell success from failure.

If you can't recognize failure, you can't correct it.

If you can't see success, you can't reward it.

If you can't see success, you can't learn from it.

— From *Reinventing Government*  
By David Osborne and Ted Gaebler

School Improvement Initiative

(Continued from page 1)

Without reliable, meaningful information, it is not possible to understand how well Montana's students and schools are doing or how well their performance measures up to other schools and our expectations at the community, state, and national levels.

The demand for data and useful information about Montana's schools and students is great, as is the need. The underlying commitment of OPI's school improvement work is both to ensure the responsible reporting of data and to keep the information we gather focused on school improvement over the long term. ■



## The Performance-Based Accreditation Project: Putting the pieces into practice

**P**erformance-Based Accreditation (PBA) is one process that gives schools and their communities an opportunity to focus on assessing needs, setting goals, and developing strategies in all areas related to school effectiveness.

PBA relies on *qualitative* data concerning the performance of its students, rather than on *quantitative* data about inputs such as the number of students per class, administrators, and classes. This accreditation option is characterized by three things.

- ✓Community Involvement;
- ✓A Combined Focus on Qualitative and Quantitative Data;
- ✓An Alignment of Standards and Assessment.

As a result, the PBA process can incorporate the content and performance standards into the school improvement process and provide a means to align a

school's assessment methods with its specific needs for useful data and information.

### The fundamental questions

Through the PBA process, educators and other members of the school and local community seek to answer five fundamental questions.

- ✓What are the particular needs and strengths of this community and its students?
- ✓What is this school's mission and philosophy of education?
- ✓What are students expected to learn and be able to do, and what level of performance does this school and community deem acceptable?
- ✓How effective are the school's instructional methods and organizational systems in fulfilling its mission?
- ✓What steps should be taken to improve the educational program of this school?

### MISTA

Seventeen Montana schools are now pursuing this alternative method of accreditation. They belong to the Montana Improving Schools through Accredita-

tion (MISTA) consortium, which includes OPI, the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, and the Board of Public Education. ■

**W**hat teachers know and can do makes the crucial difference in what children learn... Student learning in this country will improve only when we focus our efforts on improving teaching.

— From a report issued by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future

## The Professional Development/Teacher Certification Project: Emphasizing lifelong learning

**W**hat do the other four interlocking and aligned school improvement projects have to do with professional development? Everything!

Learning and teaching go hand-in-hand. One cannot talk about students' changing needs without also addressing the accompanying changes necessary in instruction—in Montana's K-12 classrooms as well as teacher education programs.

### Teacher education programs

Just as standards are important for our K-12 classrooms, they are also important for those programs that train our state's teachers. In 1979, Montana established standards for its teacher education programs.

The Montana Board of Public Education (BPE)—in partnership with OPI, the state's professional education associations, and the higher education community—reviews and revises Montana's teacher education program standards every five years.

In addition, Montana's teacher education programs regularly undergo an on-site review in order to ensure that their courses meet state standards for teacher education.

### Lifelong learning

Since 1995, Montana has required *all* teaching license holders to verify professional development when they renew

their licenses to teach.

The continuing challenge is to align professional development more directly with the needs of children in achieving success in learning. By bringing standards for teacher preparation and performance into "sync" with established standards for student achievement, the link between good teaching and effective learning will be strengthened.

### National developments

One of OPI's main goals is to make sure that developments at the national level are connected to and aligned with what is happening in Montana. Thus, both OPI and the Montana Board of Public Education are actively involved in the Montana Commission on Teaching, which was established last year. The Commission has expressed interest in working toward implementing the five recommendations issued by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future in September 1996. Those recommendations are to:

- ✓Get serious about standards for both students and teachers;
- ✓Reinvent teacher preparation and professional development;
- ✓Improve teacher recruitment and put qualified teachers in every classroom;
- ✓Encourage and reward teacher knowledge and skill; and
- ✓Create schools that are organized for student and teacher success. ■

**T**he Performance-Based Accreditation Method allows schools to meet accreditation standards by showing through their students' performance that they provide a quality education.

— From *The Performance-Based Alternative: Improving Schools Through Accreditation, Montana User's Manual*



## To summarize ...

**B**y making Montanans aware not only of statewide and local expectations for students, teachers, and school systems, but also of the strengths and needs of their local schools, these five projects, when fit together, will give the Montana public the ability to:

- ✓Form a factual picture of the work that is done in Montana's schools and the challenges and opportunities educators and students face every day;
- ✓Obtain information about statewide and national educational standards and the way their local schools measure up;
- ✓Weigh the information and make informed decisions about how to improve Montana's schools; and
- ✓Get involved to make their schools better.

**I**t is no longer good enough to know if students are above or below average; we need to find out whether they are able to attain the standards to which the real world will hold them accountable.

**W**orking together, Montanans will be able to evaluate the educational quality of their schools, target their resources, and make informed decisions about how best to continue improving the education offered Montana's children. ■

## What teachers should know ...

**T**he National Board for Professional Teaching Standards released a central policy statement titled: *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able To Do*. This statement is organized around the following five core propositions.

- ✓Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- ✓Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- ✓Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- ✓Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- ✓Teachers are members of learning communities.



# Montana schools bank on state trust lands

In a short ceremony during the August meeting of the State Board of Land Commissioners, State Superintendent Nancy Keenan received a \$40 million check from the Department of Natural Resources (DNRC) for Montana's K-12 public schools.

That check represented the income that Montana's state school trust lands generated during the past fiscal year—through mineral, grazing, timber, outfitting, and recreational access permits and through interest earned on the permanent school trust fund. Although the money was actually distributed to schools as direct state aid payments in state fiscal year 1997, the check ceremony emphasized the fact that Montana's school trust lands provide a substantial portion of the state's education budget.

### History and background

While Montana's school trust lands are publicly owned, they are not managed in the same way as Montana's other public lands, like the national forests and parks. Rather, they are held by the state "in trust" to be administered for the benefit of Montana's "common," or public, schools. To explain their unique nature, it is necessary to mention two governmental edicts which shaped America's westward expansion: the General Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.

The General Land Ordinance of 1785 set up the survey and sale of western lands, splitting the land into six-by-six mile townships, which, in turn, were divided into 36 square mile sections. The ordinance also reserved section 16 in every township "for the maintenance of public schools within the said township," thereby initiating the program of land grants for schools and ensuring that the territories would provide education for their citizens.

Two years later, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 established a system of territorial government and the transition to statehood. This ordinance made statehood a literal contract. Territories interested in joining the union entered into a process of bargaining with Congress; the final agreement was laid out in a state's Enabling Act.

An important chip in this bargaining process was the land grants for state schools. During the course of the 19th century, as Congress became more generous and the land less productive, the number of sections awarded new states increased to two, and finally, in the case of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, to four

sections per township.

### Montana's state school trust lands

On February 22, 1889, the U.S. Congress approved the Enabling Act for the State of Montana. One of the Act's provisions granted sections 16 and 36 in every township to the state for the support of its schools. By 1889, however, a number of these sections were no longer available. In some townships they had been homesteaded, some were located in federal Indian reservations, and yet others had been disposed of in other ways. Its Enabling Act allowed the state of Montana to select other lands in lieu of those sections.

The Enabling and subsequent acts also granted acreage for other educational and state institutions in addition to the common schools. Montana's total land grant encompassed 5,856,720 acres of trust lands, 5,188,800 acres for its common school grant and 668,720 acres

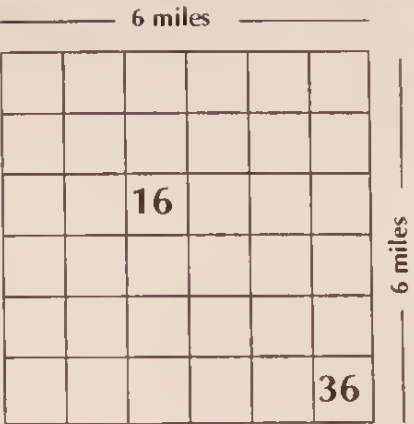
for other endowed institutions.

Due to land sales and acquisitions, the total acreage of state trust land fluctuates in Montana. Currently, these lands total 5.2 million surface and 6.2 million mineral acres. Mineral acreage exceeds surface acreage because the state has retained the mineral estate when lands are sold.

### State school land administration

The State Board of Land Commissioners oversees the administration of Montana's state trust land, as directed by the Montana State Constitution. More commonly known as the State Land Board, its members are Montana's five top elected state officials: the governor, superintendent of public instruction, secretary of state, attorney general, and state auditor.

The actual day-to-day administration and management of these lands fall to the DNRC's Trust Land Management Division. The administrators are obligated to



Starting in 1785, land was surveyed and split into six-mile square townships, which, in turn, were divided into 36 sections. At the time of statehood, Montana received sections 16 and 36 in trust for the support of its common schools.

obtain the greatest benefit for the school trusts—a task which involves ensuring continued returns to the trusts by weighing the greatest, short-term monetary return against the long-term productivity of the land.

The Trust Land Management Division is divided into four

(Continued on page 12)

## E-rate

Continued from page 3

send an email message to OPI identifying themselves and the grant they received.

In addition, schools that have recently applied for a Technology Literacy Challenge Fund (TLCF) Grant do not need to submit another technology plan. Grant reviewers will evaluate the technology plans they have already submitted for both the TLCF and E-rate programs.

Schools that do have technology plans, but do not fall into the above two categories, can submit their current plan after clearly labeling the sections that contain the information required by the FCC. For example, any part of a school's technology plan that inventories its computer equipment should be labeled A-1. This will allow the readers to quickly evaluate the plan for completeness. A school might need to add to its technology plan, if its current plan does not address all of the FCC requirements.

### Submitting plans for approval

Because the approval process relies on electronic submission, schools are asked to include an electronic copy on computer disk if they mail their technology plan

to OPI. Better yet, schools should consider using a computer and modem to submit their plans electronically via the METNET bulletin board system.

All technology plans that are submitted should clearly be labeled with their district's two-digit county code, district legal entity, and school code.

### In future years

While OPI plans to retain the elements of peer review and electronic submission, a more comprehensive technology plan may be needed for access to the E-rate discounts in future years. As the E-rate program allows schools to enjoy greater access to technology, the scope of their technology plans should naturally evolve, both to include new technologies and to ensure their use to enhance teaching and learning.

### Further hints

Applicants are encouraged to join consortia to secure cost-based, prediscount prices for the services they need. Also, in future years, schools might want to examine the way they collect their statistics for their school lunch programs in order to make

## Lead reviewers

The following individuals are responsible for coordinating the teams which will be reviewing schools' technology plans.

### Class AA, A, & B schools

Madalyn Quinlan, OPI  
P.O. Box 202501  
Helena, MT 59620-2501  
tel: 444-3168 fax: 444-1369  
email: [mquinlan@opi.mt.gov](mailto:mquinlan@opi.mt.gov)

### Class C Schools & Independent Elementary Districts

Dr. Claudette Morton  
Montana Small School Alliance  
One South Montana  
Helena, MT 59601  
tel: 442-2180 fax: 442-2194  
email: [msba@mcn.net](mailto:msba@mcn.net)

### Nonpublic schools

Dr. Tom Hart,  
Diocese of Helena,  
Superintendent of Schools  
9 S. Idaho Street  
Butte, MT 59701-1609  
tel: 723-3753 fax: 723-4759  
email: [bigtwerp@aol.com](mailto:bigtwerp@aol.com)

sure that the numbers accurately reflect all their students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunches.

Additional state-funded discounts may be available to Montana schools, libraries, tribal colleges, health care providers and community public access points through the Universal Access Program established by the 1997 Legislature and administered by the Montana Public Service Commission. ■

## E-rate resources

The following people and Internet web sites can provide more information on the E-rate discount program.

### Montana

Bonnie Lorang, Public Service Commission  
tel: 444-6191; Internet: [www.psc.mt.gov](http://www.psc.mt.gov)

Karen Strege, Montana State Library  
tel: 444-3115; Internet: [www.msl.mt.gov](http://www.msl.mt.gov)

Michael Hall, Office of Public Instruction  
tel: 444-4422; Internet: [www.opi.mt.gov](http://www.opi.mt.gov)

### National

Federal Communications Commission  
tel: 888-CALL-FCC; Internet: [www.fcc.gov/learnet](http://www.fcc.gov/learnet)

U.S. Department of Education  
tel: 800-USA-LEARN; Internet: [www.ed.gov/technology](http://www.ed.gov/technology)

EdLiNC  
Internet: [www.itc.org/edlinc/discounts](http://www.itc.org/edlinc/discounts)



## Learn and serve projects

Continued from page 3

Depression from those who experienced it.

### Canyon Creek School:

In partnership with the Yellowstone River Parks Association, Canyon Creek School, a K-8 school near Billings, "adopted" 70-acre Norm's Island located in the Yellowstone River. Students and staff invited members of their community to "Project Night," for which the school's cafeteria was transformed into Norm's Island. Each class provided examples of their studies relating to the island—displaying seed collections, a duck pond, beaver posters, bird feeders, and an aerial map of the island. Also demonstrated were student-developed

projects including a Hyper-Studio program on island wildlife and vegetation, an Internet web site, and, finally, a multimedia program. The



Canyon Creek Elementary students learn about beavers on a field trip to Norm's Island

"island" was accentuated with hundreds of bedding plants for sale by council members. The plant sale netted

\$400, which the students donated to the new visitor center at Pompey's Pillar.

### An RSVP Partnership:

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) provided valuable service projects at Bozeman's Chief Joseph Middle School. RSVP members assisted a class of students in some filming exercises and worked with students to edit a video tape. Senior volunteers and a seventh-grade class undertook a project at the Gallatin County Cemetery.

### Rattlesnake Middle School:

Students in Tech Art classes at Missoula's Rattlesnake Middle School designed, built and presented toys and furniture to child-care providers in their

neighborhood.

### Consider the learn and serve option

At some point during the school year, I encourage you to provide your K-12 students with opportunities that engage them in service to their communities in order to enrich their academic learning, promote their personal growth, and help them develop the skills they need to be responsible, productive citizens. ■

—June Atkins, Learn & Serve Coordinator, OPI

*Editor's note: For further information, contact Atkins (tel: 444-3664; email: jatkins@opi.mt.gov). She would also like to hear about any service-learning projects that schools have developed for their students.*

## Congress amends IDEA

### Sweeping changes hold great implications for special education

This past spring, Congress overwhelmingly approved the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997. Signed into law by President Clinton, this reauthorization represents the most sweeping reform of IDEA since it was first adopted in the 1970s—virtually every section of the law contains significant improvements.

### A sample of IDEA changes

Revisions to IDEA stress the importance of parent involvement and emphasize access for students with disabilities to the general education curriculum and schoolwide assessment. Other changes expand a school's disciplinary authority for certain behaviors while obligating schools to continue providing eligible students with special

education and participation in the general education curriculum. Still others establish state improvement plans, require additional data collection, and consolidate training grants. In addition, IDEA now provides more flexibility in reevaluations, but adds requirements to the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

### Key issues of interest

The issues surrounding funding and discipline drew the most attention during the Congressional debate on IDEA. The following sections provide a brief overview of important changes to those provisions of IDEA.

### Discipline

In the area of discipline, the IDEA revisions contain:

- Greater latitude for school authorities to make 45-day placements in alternative education settings for students who possess a weapon at school or knowingly possess or sell illegal drugs at school;
- Greater authority for a hearing officer to order a 45-day placement in an alternative education setting in the presence of substantial (beyond a preponderance) evidence that the student's current placement is likely to result in injury to the student or others;
- Increased responsibility for school officials to provide special education services to students; to allow students to participate in the general curriculum while placed in an alternative education setting; and to provide services designed to address the behavior while the student is in the alternative education setting, so that the behavior does not occur again; and

- Clarity that schools may transfer, to a receiving school, the discipline records of students with disabilities in the same manner that they transfer such information for students with no disabilities.

### Funding

IDEA revisions affecting funding include:

- An adjustment to the funding formula which will distribute federal funds above a \$4.9 billion base according to a census and poverty index, rather than the number of children served in special education;
- Future restrictions on the proportion of federal funds that states may set aside for administration of the IDEA Part B grant—a change that will result in local schools and cooperatives receiving a greater proportion of future increases in federal appropriations; and
- Greater flexibility in the procedures for determining the "maintenance of fiscal effort"—a revision that allows both for adjustments for exceptionally costly programs a student no longer needs and for the replacement of personnel with lower paid personnel (i.e., retirement of experienced teachers).

### For more information

The entire text of the IDEA as amended can be found on the Internet at <<http://thomas.loc.gov>>. In addition, a variety of training opportunities will be provided in the fall to help all of us become familiar with the new requirements. ■

—Robert Runkel, Director, OPI Division of Special Education

## Earthquake Preparedness Month

October is Earthquake Preparedness Month! This is a great chance for educators and parents to relay the importance of earthquake preparedness to their students, children, coworkers and friends. Since Montana is one of the most seismically active states, it is vital we be prepared to handle the consequences of an earthquake.

### Be prepared, be safe

Remember, smaller earthquakes can be as devastating as the larger ones if you and your building are unprepared. The resulting costs can be significant in both property and lives.

When the earth shakes, just about anything that is not secured can fly, roll or slide around a room. These items can be dangerous! Look around to see what you can do to make your surroundings safer.

### A few safety suggestions

- Position desks, tables, and furniture so they cannot slide and block exits
- Securely fasten computers to work space and attach

bookshelves and cabinets to the wall.

- Keep aquariums protected from overturning and sliding off tables.
- Secure large, heavy office machines and shop equipment to the wall or floor.
- Anchor any freestanding equipment mounted on wheels.
- Restrain potted plants and other heavy items on top of cabinets, cupboards or tables. Even better, move them!

We don't know when and we don't know where, but we do know Montana will experience a significant trembler. Just as we buckle our seat belts, wear life preservers, dress appropriately for Montana weather, carry a spare tire and conduct fire drills, we need to take precautions and be prepared to survive an earthquake. ■

—Monique Lay, Earthquake Program Manager, State Disaster and Emergency Services Program

For more information or earthquake preparedness suggestions, contact your local Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator or Lay (444-6963).



"Dispatches" are updates by Office of Public Instruction staff. Staff members may be reached at the phone numbers and email addresses listed or by writing them at OPI, P.O. Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620-2501.

**Literacy/ Learn and Serve**  
June Atkins, Coordinator  
444-3664  
jatkings@opi.mt.gov

## Volunteers

Do you need volunteers at your school? If you answer is yes, help is on the way. In addition to the groups in your community, a number of organizations and opportunities are on the horizon.

So, now is the time to plan how volunteers can help you help all students achieve their highest potential. Also pending are several grant opportunities that could enable you to maximize your resources to benefit all students in in-school or after-school programs.

## America Reads Challenge Act

On April 28, President Clinton sent Congress legislation to help build *A Nation of Readers—The America Reads Challenge Act*.

Designed to ensure that every student can read independently and well by the end of third grade, this act will help mobilize skilled reading specialists, AmeriCorp members, and trained volunteer reading tutors. The act represents a five-year, \$2.75 billion commitment to local communities and organizations, as well as national and regional efforts.

The proposed America Reads Challenge Act asks every American to help. It sets out several essential strategies to help our children learn to read:

- creating more learning opportunities to supplement classroom reading instruction;
- encouraging parents to help their children develop readiness skills for reading—parental involvement should begin at birth and continue through their children's school years; and
- bringing best teaching practices into classrooms.

## Training manual

The International Reading Association (IRA) has developed a manual for training reading tutors. The manual, coauthored by Dr. Barbara Walker of MSU-Billings and Dr. Leslie Mandel Morrow of Rutgers University, embraces the latest research findings and best teaching practices. It will be available this fall.

## Federal work-study expansion

President Clinton has asked college presidents to allocate half their new work-study slots to college students who want to be America Reads tutors. These students will work with teachers,

families, and community organizations. If you would like work-study students in your school, contact either a college, university, or the Campus Compact Coordinator in your area. America Reads Tutors may also work in their home communities during their summer break. UM President Dr. George Dennison, who serves on a national committee to organize work-study tutors, has organized a Montana steering committee to assist with this effort in our state.

## Learn and Serve projects

The Corporation for National Service has awarded OPI a three-year Learn and Serve Grant. OPI will use this grant to help schools develop projects that encourage learning through service for K-12 students. In the near future, competitive grants will be available from OPI for schools interested in establishing K-12 service-learning regional demonstration centers and service-learning mini-grant projects.

Contact me for further information about these programs, volunteer opportunities and grant applications.

**Curriculum and Assessment**  
Jan (Hahn) Clinard  
444-3714  
jhahn@opi.mt.gov

## MISTA update

During this school year, 17 Montana schools will continue through the Performance-Based Accreditation (PBA) process. They are a part of the MISTA (Montana

Improving Schools through Accreditation) consortium, which includes a partnership with OPI, the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), and the Board of Public Education.

During the 1996-97 school year, over 100 MISTA school staff members received six days of intensive training from NWREL consultants Nancey Olson and Joan Shaughnessy. That training included "Response Team" training on July 30-31 in Helena. The 20 teachers and administrators who participated are available as "Critical Friends" to respond to the documents and processes which the MISTA schools developed over the course of the past year. The response teams will also help each other as their schools begin writing their School Improvement Plans.

## Help for interested schools

Response team members are also trained and armed with materials to lead awareness sessions for any school interested in pursuing the PBA alternative. Please contact me if you would like a list of people who can provide this service.

## NWREL conference

Several MISTA representatives attended the New Challenges in Sustaining School Improvement conference sponsored by the

NWREL, July 20-24. During the conference, participants heard about a number of elements important to school improvement, such as their school's "learning community" and "story." They also explored the connection between decentralization, vision, external support and successful, sustainable school improvement. Short summaries of a few conference meetings follow.

## The "learning community"

The first conference morning focused on the "learning community," with presentations by researchers Ken Leithwood and Karen Seashore Louis.

Leithwood identified five characteristics of schools as learning organizations:

- A clear, shared, meaningful school vision and mission that inform decisions;
- A collaborative school culture with elements that encourage shared information, risk-taking, and commitment to helping students learn;
- A decentralized school structure that promotes team teaching, professional development, and decisions by consensus;
- School strategies that include systematic school improvement planning; and
- Policies and resources that support essential professional development and school improvement plans.

## The professional community

Louis discussed how the professional community glues schools together, lending stability to the processes in which teachers publicly share their teaching strategies, successes, failures, and student work. She also identified a number of important features of the professional community, including shared norms about teaching and learning; a focus on learning; collaboration; reflective dialogue; and a sense of collective responsibility for the learning of all students.

## The importance of "story"

Conference participants heard the "story" of one of four schools during an exercise that demonstrated storytelling as a powerful tool for self-analysis. As school personnel fill out the questionnaires that help them plan and share their stories—which contain both negative and positive story elements, they become more aware of the intricacies of their own processes. Through the telling of their stories to response teams, staff and community, MISTA may find that members will strengthen their processes and clarify their goals and mission.

## Decentralization and school improvement

Allan Odden of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education discussed the importance of decentralization to the school improvement process. Effective

decentralized systems, he said, contain nine elements. They focus on curriculum and instruction; involve all teachers in making decisions; give school personnel authority; invest in professional development; create a professional school culture; develop a school information system; develop an accountability system with both rewards and sanctions; select principals who can facilitate change; and provide schools with control over their budgets.

## Participant input

On the last morning, state teams gathered to develop new design specifications for training and development in school improvement. The Montana team pointed out the need to provide educators with information about schoolwide programs, site-based management, and learning communities. The team felt strongly that Montana needs content and performance standards. They also suggested that school profiles include Odden's nine key elements related to decentralization and schoolwide planning. And, finally, they felt more time needed to be committed to the school improvement process, particularly in large districts that have only one MISTA school.

## Key concepts at the conference

Many of the discussions during this conference were based on the importance of vision as an organizational process. A well-articulated, focused, and mutually developed vision can help learning communities implement and adjust to change in all aspects of their school.

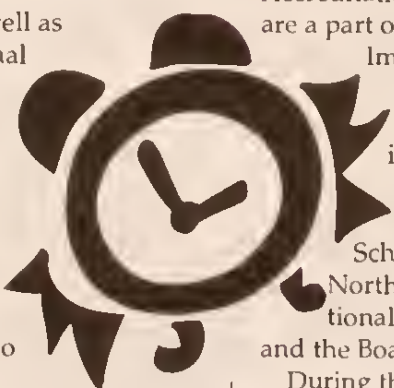
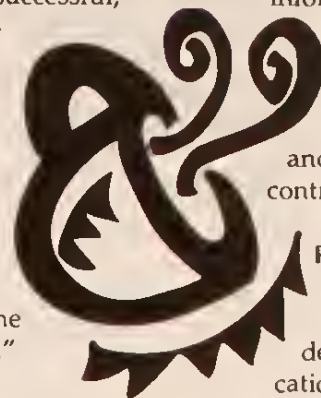
Another theme that emerged is that constructive change cannot be a quick process. Sustaining school improvement requires continued support. Often, that support must come from outside a school and consist not only of financial support, but also facilitating, paying attention to, and publicizing success.

## Aesthetic Literacy Update

We still have copies of the *Framework for Aesthetic Literacy Curriculum Cycles and Implementation Guide*. Also available are three additional cycles, based on Building Resiliency Through Aesthetic Literacy (a Safe and Drug-free Schools project). *Framework* Ambassadors continue to hold workshops for interested schools. The OPI and Montana Arts Council booklet *Inservice that Inspires: Breathing Life into Learning Through the Arts* contains details about these inservices. It was mailed to school administrators last spring.

## MATELA update

The Montana Association of Teachers of English Language Arts (MATELA) was among the cosponsors of the three-day April retreat "Leadership Without Easy Answers" that brought together 21 teachers and artists. Participants studied the works of Heifetz,





Senge, Wheatley, and others to learn new leadership concepts and approaches.

MATELA's Fall Conference, October 16-17 in Billings, will feature a banquet cosponsored by the Montana Library Association. The speaker will be Jeff Shaara, author of *Gods and Generals*, a book about the tumultuous, bloody decade leading up to the Battle of Gettysburg. With the theme, "Discovering the Wonder of Our World," the MATELA conference will focus on student research using the expertise of National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) speaker, Karen Smith.

The NCTE National Convention, "Language as Moral Action," will be held in Detroit, MI, on November 20-25.

## Science-Mathematics Consortium for Northwest Schools

Patricia B. Johnson, State Coordinator  
444-2736  
pjohanson@opi.mt.gov

One of 10 regional consortia founded by Congress and administered by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE), the Science and Mathematics Consortium for Northwest Schools (SMCNWS) serves schools and education-related agencies in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. The SMCNWS's services are designed to render catalytic support that will broaden the effect, accelerate the pace, and increase the effectiveness of regional improvements in science and mathematics education.

## Educational equity

The consortium sponsored two equity projects this past year.

In June, teachers assembled in Boise, ID, to participate in a SMCNWS Parent Involvement Institute based upon the Family Math and Family Science programs. These teachers can now use the strategies they learned to involve families in their children's math and science education. Four teachers from Montana attended: *Theodora Weatherwax*—Browning; *Susie Kenison*, *Laure Cysewski*, and *Catherine Caracciolo*—Belgrade.

In the spring, Northeast Consortium Director Bob McLaughlin met with representatives from each of the northwest states to present his consortium's model for school district data collection, aggregation and analysis. A group of people from our region with expertise in both equity issues and school, state, and national data collection evaluated the northeast model and selected a steering committee to adapt it for use in the Northwest.

## Technology

SMCNWS held a Technological Applications in Science and Math Education (TASME TWO) training this summer in Bellingham, WA. Teachers applied via the web, and

TASME TWO instruction extended their knowledge of web searching, structure, and web page design.

Montana participants were

*Tammy Stuart*—Cut Bank;  
*Rosemary Davis*, *Jackie Rygg*, *Marilyn Granell*,  
*Vicky Michels*, and *Nancy Peterson*—Havre.

## Informal Science

Much learning occurs in an informal setting outside the classroom. Nonschool-based providers of science, math, and technology education include museums, zoos, governmental agencies, and others.

The 10 Regional Science and Mathematics Consortia maintain a national directory of the large walk-in facilities on a web page at [www.scienceadventures.org](http://www.scienceadventures.org). Within our region, the *Directory of Northwest Informal Resources*, which lists many informal resource providers, will soon be published. The regional information will eventually be available and kept up to date on an Internet web site.

## POTLATCH

The collection and dissemination of promising practices is another major regional task. That collection, to be published under the title of *POTLATCH: Sharing Our Best*, offers educators the opportunity to recognize the great programs in Montana. Please contact me for a POTLATCH nomination form.

## Resources to explore

Assessment, equity, and professional development are all regional goals of SMCNWS. To this end, there is a wealth of information on the SMCNWS regional web page at [www.col-ed.org/smcnws](http://www.col-ed.org/smcnws). Performance assessment task examples are being collected at [www.col-ed.org/smcnws/asstask.html](http://www.col-ed.org/smcnws/asstask.html). Equity resources are at [www.col-ed.org/smcnws/equity](http://www.col-ed.org/smcnws/equity). Math, science or technology professional development events in the Northwest are listed by state. The SMCNWS-Montana web page address is [www.col-ed.org/mt/](http://www.col-ed.org/mt/). Please advise me of any conferences, events, workshops, or news that should be posted on the Montana web site.

Most public libraries provide web access if unavailable otherwise.

## Educators' conference

SMCNWS is sponsoring five sectionals and an exhibit booth during the MEA/MFT Conference in Billings on October 16-17. A two-hour overview of grant writing and a one-hour overview of SMCNWS offerings will be given on Thursday and repeated on Friday. A one-hour sectional on using the AAAS Project 2061 is scheduled for Thursday.

## Support for staff development

SMCNWS has a small amount of money to provide partial, leveraged assistance to ongoing projects designed to systematically change math and science education within school districts. Contact me for the guidelines.

**Nutrition Education & Training**  
**Katie Bark, Program Coordinator**  
**994-5641**  
[uhdkb@montana.edu](mailto:uhdkb@montana.edu)

## Students and breakfast

This school year, open your students' eyes to a healthy and smart start each day by teaching them to enjoy a good breakfast. Studies show that eating breakfast is associated with improved strength and endurance in the late morning, along with a better attitude toward school or work. Students who eat breakfast

- perform better on tests,
- are more alert, attentive, and less likely to cause disciplinary problems, and
- are generally more well-nourished than students who miss their morning meal.

## Lesson plans

The following paragraphs suggest a few easy ways to teach breakfast across the curriculum.

After introducing breakfast's importance, have students share both what they ate that morning and their favorite breakfast food. Categorize their breakfast choices using the Food Guide Pyramid. *Nutrition Tip:* To ensure that it is balanced and nutrient dense, a breakfast menu should include at least three of the five food groups.

Choose breakfast as a discussion or speech topic. Have students discuss what a healthy breakfast would consist of, develop five easy and fast breakfast menus, and determine the cost of these menus. Add extra interest by also addressing "nontraditional" breakfast choices and the difference of breakfast choices among cultures.

Have a guest speaker come to your classroom to discuss the benefits of eating breakfast. Contact your local county MSU Extension Service or the NET Program for more ideas for guest speakers on nutrition or health.

## Homework Ideas

Assign students the task of preparing a healthy, quick, creative breakfast for their family some weekend morning. Have students interview family members to find out their "favorite breakfast foods." Then, create a graph on favorite breakfast foods in class. *Breakfast Fact:* 51 percent of children in the U.S. report they do not eat breakfast every day. How do your students rate against the national average?

## Use your school's programs

If your school has a breakfast program, help teach by example. Enjoy a nutritious breakfast with students at school or work with your school food service manager to plan a classroom breakfast meal. Have students invite their parents and the principal to join them.

*Terrific Teacher Tip:* Joanne Wilcox, who teaches health enhancement at Bozeman High School, took her first period class to school breakfast each morning during a six-week classroom block. As a result, her students got in the

habit of eating breakfast and experienced the benefits of eating breakfast daily.

Another possibility is to ask the library to set up a book display on breakfast. Make sure to include books with healthy, easy recipes for children to prepare themselves. If needed, the NET program has books that can be borrowed to use in such a display.

## Ready Resources

Check out these resources from the NET Program to use in your classroom when teaching students about breakfast:

- *EAGAHBEDD: Eat a Good and Healthy Breakfast Every Day Day:* This lively video is appropriate for K-4 grade students and features characters who discover just why a good breakfast is important.
- *Breakfast Quest* (grades 3-5) or *Breakfast Quest Challenge* (grades 6-8): These ready-to-use lesson plans show students how eating breakfast can help them look their best and feel energetic.
- *Breakfast in a Box* (grades 1-3): This Montana-made resource from Lewistown School District (sponsored by a NET Program grant) can help you with easy and fun lesson plans on breakfast and good nutrition.

## More Help Available....

Be sure to contact the NET Program; we can help you coordinate your nutrition lessons this school year. If you would like help starting a breakfast program in your school, call the OPI School Foods Program (444-2501).

**HIV/AIDS Education**  
**Susan Court, Specialist**  
**444-3178**  
[scourt@opi.mt.gov](mailto:scourt@opi.mt.gov)

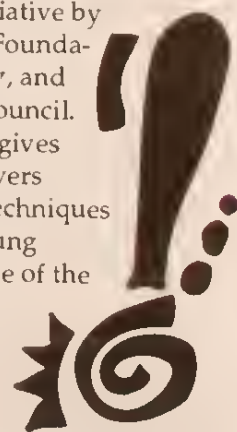
## New resource

Designed to help adults talk with their children about those sticky subjects that concern both kids and adults, *Talking with Kids About Tough Issues* was created through a joint initiative by the Kaiser Family Foundation, Children Now, and The Advertising Council. This 60-page book gives parents and caregivers concrete tips and techniques on talking with young children about some of the most sensitive, important, and hard-to-discuss issues of today's world: sex and sexuality, drugs and alcohol, AIDS and violence.

Single copies are free. To order, call 800-CHILD-44.

**Traffic Education**  
**Curt Hahn, Specialist**  
**444-4432**  
[chahn@opi.mt.gov](mailto:chahn@opi.mt.gov)

**Traffic Education Reimbursement**  
Schools completing high school





programs in traffic education between July 1, 1996, and June 31, 1997 have received their reimbursement payments. If your school district did not, please call. The amount paid was \$97.71 per pupil. We expect next year's per pupil reimbursement to be about \$95.

## 1998 Conference

The 1998 State Traffic Education Conference/Workshop will be April 26-28, 1998, at the Helena Colonial Inn.

## Driver Testing Program

Currently, 105 high school districts and 232 traffic educators are certified through Montana's Cooperative Driver Testing Program (CDTP). Because CDTP is new and we are dealing with so many programs, teachers, and examiners, there is some misinformation "floating" around.

Sooooo... please... call me if you have any questions or want to become eligible to process driver's license applications and administer your students' state driver's license tests.

## Brake for Safety

The Anti-Lock Brake System (ABS) Education Alliance has initiated the *America Brakes for Safety* campaign to provide the public with current information about ABS. To get a free brochure, call 800-ABS-8958.

## Ready, Set, Winter

Winter will soon be here, and the AAA Foundation is distributing a free instructional video on winter driving. The video contains three segments: how to prepare for winter driving; what to watch out for in bad weather; and strategies to deal with possible problems. The video also provides information specific to vehicles with and without ABS. A teacher's guide is included. To order call 800-993-7222 or fax to 202-638-5943.

## New Catalog

The AAA Foundation's new catalog of videos and traffic safety education materials is hot off the presses. Call or write to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 1440 New York Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20005 (tel: 800-304-SAFE; fax: 202-638-5943). Please include your name and address on any fax.

## Sample Traffic Safety home pages

Here are some web sites dealing with traffic safety that you might want to check out:

- Mothers Against Drunk Driving: <[www.olympic.net/MADD](http://www.olympic.net/MADD)>
- American Driver & Traffic Safety Education Assn.: <[www.adtsea.drivers.com/adtsea](http://www.adtsea.drivers.com/adtsea)>
- National Highway Traffic Safety Admin.: <[www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)>
- Mr. Traffic Ed: <[www.mrtraffic.com](http://www.mrtraffic.com)>
- Goodyear: <[www.goodyear.com](http://www.goodyear.com)>
- Traffic Safety Internet Village: <[www.pde.drivers.com](http://www.pde.drivers.com)>

## School-to-Work

Marion L. Reed, Specialist  
444-3000  
[mreed@opi.mt.gov](mailto:mreed@opi.mt.gov)

## Administrative update

In Montana, School-to-Work (STW) is alive and well. Our STW State Plan was accepted, and we will submit an application for an "implementation grant" this fall. If approved, the grant funds will let us build on the activities already started at the state, district, and community levels. We will also be able to expand our STW System and partnership development at the state and local levels.

## Integrated curriculum

Montana, through STW, is piloting the *Integrated System for Workforce Education Curricula* (ISWEC) project for the Center for Occupational Research and Development (CORD). This project will give school districts assistance in developing integrated curriculum standards. Districts will be able to access an extensive data base of elements of standards that has been developed through research into education organizations and information, business and industry organization and standards, and employability information and standards.

The data base provides information that can help staff determine the relevance of curricular offerings, thereby providing invaluable assistance in curricula review and planning. Montana school districts can apply or adapt standards developed by CORD, the state, or any other school district. As soon as possible, I will make more information available, so stay tuned, this could be an answer for your district.

## MEA/MFT Conference

STW presentations will be on the programs at both the MEA/MFT Educator and the Montana Conference for Education Leadership conferences. These presentations should give you some ideas as to the "why" we should do STW and the "how" STW will benefit both your students and community.

For further information about STW give me a call or drop me an email message.

## Family and Consumer Science

Laurie Stelter, Specialist  
444-2059  
[lstelter@opi.mt.gov](mailto:lstelter@opi.mt.gov)

## National standards, in progress....

The development of national standards for Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Education is well underway. The Vocational Education Consortium of States (VTECS) is conducting the project, and Montanans have had a number of opportunities to contribute. Montana has submitted

## 1997 Montana School Laws

### Order your copy now and have it by Thanksgiving!

The legal staff at OPI has finished compiling the 1997 *School Laws of Montana*, and OPI is now accepting orders. The cost is \$12 per copy and your payment must accompany your order. All county and school district offices as well as principals should have received an order form. If you did not, call Pat Reichert (444-4402) and request one.

two content-standard-related documents to the VTECS, and Montana teachers have responded to draft documents and helped to draft four content standards.

Over the summer, a nationwide "development panel," comprised of business and industry representatives, teachers, university professors and state administrators, met twice to discuss the information collected from the preceding phases. Then, in August, a Montana delegation traveled to Portland to participate in one of five regional "focus groups."

## The next step

On October 16, 1997, the project is coming to the Montana Vocational Association (MVA) meeting in Butte. There, Montana educators can respond to the portions of the document in progress. After that, the next opportunity for input will be in December during the American Vocational Association's (AVA) Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, NV. The semifinal draft of the national FCS standards will be on the agenda of the pre-session conference Tuesday, December 9, and the FACS Division General Session on Saturday morning, December 13.

## Why national FCS standards?

Standards are developed in order to determine what students should know and be able to do. FCS teachers can use this document to evaluate and perhaps improve their school's FCS educational program. The document can serve as a challenge to teachers to think outside of their current patterns of delivering instruction to their students. The final product will contain scenarios and other means of assessing student achievement.

## The BIGGER Picture

When it is finalized, the FCS national standards document will be added to the data base of standards, which are part of the Integrated System for Workforce Education Curricula (ISWEC). Its presence there will add FCS elements to the information that schools bring to the "decision-making table" when they seek integrated standards from ISWEC for revising or updating their curricula.

As a result, the needs of families will be identified in the standards for student achievement, along with academic and occupational needs. Through the conscious decisions of administrators, school boards, and educators to focus on a curriculum that will develop

family leaders, society will reap the benefits of cultivating individuals who are sensitive and responsive to their multiple roles of family member, wage earner, and community leader.

## FHA/HERO Leadership Meeting

The journey to "Destination Excellence" involved 92 Montana FHA/HERO delegates who felt they'd "arrived" when they landed in San Diego, CA, for the 1997 FHA/HERO National Leadership Meeting, July 4-11. The San Diego climate and conference facilities were "excellent," but as partici-

pants viewed projects conducted by their peers, listened to Olympic swimmer Janet Evans talk about the challenges she faced, and participated in a community service activity, they recognized that the journey is what matters, not the destination.

Montana's delegation earned 14 gold, eight silver, and one bronze medals at the national competition.

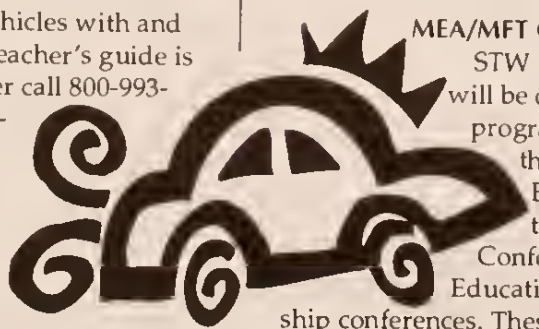
## Dusty Sveum elected

One Montana student chose a path that will give him the chance to reach more "destinations" during the 1997-98 school year. Sunburst senior Dusty Sveum was elected to one of 10 national FHA/HERO officer positions which lead this student organization of 240,000 plus members. Dusty, his family, and consumer sciences adviser, Nancy Linnell, completed one week of leadership development in Reston, VA, and have a full agenda for the upcoming year.

With the content of his candidate speech, the comparison of an automobile to an active FHA/HERO member, and the ease with which he presented himself before the Pacific Region, there's an "excellent" chance that Dusty will arrive at most any "destination" he sets his mind on reaching!

## Your name on the web

Through a Carl Perkins Vocational/Applied Technology state leadership grant under the direction of Dr. Scott Davis and Dr. Holly Hunts, both of MSU-Bozeman, teachers have the chance to get their name and program on a web site. Here's what you need to do: plan and implement a curriculum that integrates at least one vocational and one academic course and conduct a pre- and post-test that the project directors will give to you. For more specifics, contact Dr. Hunts (tel: 994-7993; email: [uhdhh@montana.edu](mailto:uhdhh@montana.edu)) or Dr. Davis (tel: 994-5775; email: [uadsd@maia.montana.edu](mailto:uadsd@maia.montana.edu)).





# Bulletin Board

Listings in the Bulletin Board do not necessarily imply endorsement by the Office of Public Instruction.

## Professional Development

### NWREL Fellowships

The Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL) is looking for teachers to serve in fellowship capacities. Most are done during the summer but that isn't a requirement. Depending on the area in which the teacher wants to work, qualifications and responsibilities vary.

Steve Nelson is looking for a teacher from a rural school to work in their rural education program. The Lab can pay the cost of transportation to and from Portland and \$13.00 per hour.

Contact NWREL, 503-275-9500 or Gail Gray, Assistant Superintendent, OPI, 444-2089.

### MSU-Billings Outreach Classes

The Department of Special Education and Reading is offering two Spring Outreach classes.

- *Teaching Students with Mental Retardation and Severe Disabilities* will meet January-April, one weekend a month in Bozeman.
- *Theories and Systems: Emotional Disturbance* will meet in Helena every Wednesday night during the spring semester.

Registration will begin November 3, 1997. To request a brochure, which includes a registration form, please call 657-2203.

## Resources

### Traffic Ed Video Library

Western Montana College (WMC) has a video library that rents and lends videos related to traffic ed, bike safety, pedestrian safety, bus safety, driver education, etc. OPI plans to make the catalog available on METNET within one month. However, if you'd like to order a copy for \$20, call WMC (683-7541) and ask for the *Traffic Education AV Library Catalog for 1996-97*.

### Seismic Resources

The State Disaster and Emergency Services Office has *Seismic Sleuth* training kits available to loan teachers. The kits contain all the materials and information to provide interactive and educa-

tional earthquake training to students in grades 7-12. Teachers are responsible for shipping costs and the replacement of anything that is lost, broken, or depleted.

Teachers can get Boss Models and Model Walls for their classes on a first-come, first-served basis. These models help visually demonstrate how earthquakes affect buildings and structures. If you are interested in any of these resources, contact Monique Lay, Earthquake Program Manager (444-6963).

## Interesting Travel Service

### The Educators Bed and Breakfast Network — \$27 a night for two.

This is a private membership

*Editor's note: Over the summer, I have collected a mighty list of award winning students, and educators—from Montana's new Teacher of the Year, Patty Myers, to the winning team of last spring's state Math Counts! competition.*

*Unfortunately, there just wasn't enough space in this issue to give them all the special mention they deserve. So, the next Montana Schools will run a large "Kudos" column. If you know of someone who should be included, please let me know (444-4397; bsatre@opi.mt.gov) as soon as possible*

travel network of B&Bs for educators. Currently there are 3,600 members in 40 countries. For more information, check out their web site at [www.efn.org/~edbabnet](http://www.efn.org/~edbabnet) call 800-377-3480, or write to Box 5279, Eugene, OR 97405.

# CALENDAR

## October

15-17: Montana Vocational Association meetings, Butte—Oscar Cantu, Winifred High School, 462-5429.  
16-17: MEA/MFT Educators Conference, Billings—Eric Feaver, MEA, 442-4250 or Jim McGarvey, MFT, 442-2123  
16-17: Montana State Reading Conference, Billings—Susan Stanton, 232-5883 or June Atkins, OPI, 444-3664  
23-25: Head Start & Montana Early Childhood Conference, Billings—728-5460  
25: Five Valleys Reading Conference, UM, Missoula—Jane Mason, 363-4568 or June Atkins, OPI, 444-3664  
29-31: Western Regional Symposium on Child Abuse and Sexual Assault, Eugene, OR—call 541-747-1235

## November

3-4: Work Now and in the Future 14 Portland, OR—NW Regional Education Laboratory, 800-547-6339 x 550  
16-22: American Education Week  
19-22: CADCA National Leadership Forum, Washington, DC—800-542-2322  
19-22: National Leadership Forum VIII, Washington, DC—800-542-2322 x 231  
20: Montana Council of Deans of Education, MSU-Bozeman—Dr.

Randy Hitz, 994-6792

20-25: NCTE National Convention, Detroit, MI—Jan Hahn Clinard, OPI, 444-3714

## December

4-5: Montana Board of Public Education meeting, Helena—Heidi Redman, 444-6576-0302  
7-10: State Teacher Ed Program Review, Western Montana College, Dillon—Don Freshour, 444-2577

## 1998

### January

12-13: Tools for Schools, San Diego, CA—800-394-0115

### February

8-14: FHA/HERO Week

### March

26-28: FHA/HERO State Leadership Conference, Billings—Laurie Stelter, OPI, 444-2059; email: [lstelter@opi.mt.gov](mailto:lstelter@opi.mt.gov)  
25-28: National Youth Crime Prevention Conference, Orlando, FL—202-446-6272 x 152  
26-28: National Conference on Creating the Quality School, Washington, DC—405-325-1450

### April

26-28: State Traffic Education Conference/Workshop, Helena—Curt Hahn, OPI, 444-4432

If you would like to have your event listed on this calendar, please call or send an email message to Beth Satre, Editor (444-4397, [bsatre@opi.mt.gov](mailto:bsatre@opi.mt.gov)). Please include the date of your event, the location, and a contact name and number.

## Group seeks input from library staff

A number of library professionals are now exploring whether enough interest exists in Montana to develop a library support staff interest group.

Such a group would help library and support staff from around the state "connect" and discuss issues surrounding the specific needs and concerns of

the state's library paraprofessionals. Possible topics of interest include:

- ✓ Opportunities for continuing education, and training;
- ✓ Benefits and opportunities for advancement;
- ✓ Basic education requirements for support staff positions;
- ✓ Compensation for education, experience, and responsibility-

ties, and recognition for the contributions to the profession.

Interested library support staff should contact Rita Gibson, Circulation Assistant, State Law Library (tel: 444-3660; fax: 444-3603) or Barbara Pepper Rotness, Acquisitions Technician, Montana State Library (email: [bpepper@msl.mt.gov](mailto:bpepper@msl.mt.gov)) as soon as possible. ■

## State school trust lands

Continued from page 7

primary programs, which correspond to the primary income generating resources found on state trust lands. Those programs are agriculture and grazing management, forest management, minerals management, and special-use management.

### Where does the money go?

Proceeds from the sale or permanent disposition of any of the trust lands are deposited into permanent funds to be invested for the support and maintenance of Montana's public schools and the various state institutions for which the lands were granted. The Montana Constitution orders that these permanent funds shall forever remain inviolate, guaran-

teed by the state of Montana against loss or diversion.

The yearly income comes primarily from rentals received on leased lands, interest earned on the permanent funds arising from these lands, and interest earned on deferred payments on lands sold. This, and all other actual income, is distributed each year to public schools as direct state aid payments, for their maintenance and support.

### Fiscal year 1997

The Trust Land Management Division generated over \$60 million in FY 97, and Montana's

K-12 public schools received \$40 million of that, an amount which equals \$240 per student. Another \$15 million was deposited into the permanent fund for common school support, increasing its balance to \$301,196,302. ■

—Loraine Shepard, Administrative Officer, Trust Land Management Division, DNRC

*Editor's note: For more information, either contact the Trust Land Management Division (444-2074) or keep reading Montana Schools. Future issues will carry articles from each of the four programs that administer the school trust lands.*

This document printed at government expense. 14,000 copies of this public document were produced and distributed at an estimated cost of \$0.19 per copy.